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【 South Vietnam: Ground action was generally light on 4-5 January but a Communist bomb set off in the mess hall of a US Army unit 18 miles northwest of Saigon on 3 January killed 15 and wounded 26 US soldiers.

Allied forces have uncovered a number of additional Communist weapons caches over the last several days, many of them in the provinces near Saigon. The recent jump in the number of caches being discovered suggests that the enemy is moving large amounts of arms into forward areas in preparation for renewed large-scale action.

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Guyana: The Guyanese Defense Force is slowly re-establishing government control in the southwestern portion of the country where a Venezuelan-directed insurrection broke out on 2 January.

The rebel force of ranchers and Amerindians is breaking up into small groups and retreating, some across the border into Brazil. Brazilian authorities have arrested many, including at least seven they believe are ringleaders in the revolt. Those rebels still in Guyana may cause further trouble for the security force.

Guyana's Prime Minister Burnham has denounced the revolt as a Venezuelan plot and will probably bring the subject up at this week's meeting of Commonwealth prime ministers in London. The Venezuelans, for their part, are maintaining their innocence. They have not publicly responded to rebel calls for help.

 (Map)

USSR: The Soviets launched a space probe toward Venus yesterday.

Moscow announced the probe as Venus 5, an automatic interplanetary station designed to descend gently through the planet's atmosphere. TASS also announced that the probe, which will reach Venus in mid-May, carries slightly more and improved instrumentation than the last probe, Venus 4.

Venus 5 apparently will repeat the mission of Venus 4, which landed on the planet in October 1967, scoring the USSR's first and only successful planetary operation. Venus 4, however, ceased transmitting prior to landing. Some of the improved instrumentation on Venus 5 probably is designed to ensure continuous transmission during descent to the surface.

The Soviets may well launch at least one more Venus probe within the next two weeks. Since their planetary program began in 1960 the Soviets have launched two or three Venus probes during the optimum period that occurs every 18 months.

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India: Renewed strife may erupt in Nagaland as the eastern Indian state prepares for the legislative assembly election in February.

The Naga underground organization has been split during the last 18 months, but the militant Naga group that favors aid from China and the reopening of hostilities commands support from more than half the estimated 9,000 insurgents now under arms.

The Indians believe that some 2,500 Nagas may now have gone across northern Burma to China for training. About 600 are thought to be back in Nagaland, and [redacted] another 800 have returned to the India-Burma border area, where they are attempting to cross in small groups into India. Indian security forces have increased their border patrols but army leaders concede that it is virtually impossible to block the movement of small groups through the heavy jungle along the frontier.

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Militant insurgents are expected to try to disrupt the election, and may use violence to prevent another election victory by the Naga National Organization, which negotiated Nagaland statehood in 1962 and cooperates with New Delhi in its efforts to maintain order in the state. Such violence would probably provoke new clashes with Indian security forces because New Delhi is determined to try to maintain peace during the election. Moreover, the Indian Army has been ordered to attack Naga groups suspected of returning with arms supplies from China.

Serious clashes could end the official ceasefire which has been repeatedly extended by both New Delhi and the Nagas since 1964. Although most Nagas probably prefer peace and may have profited from the government's large-scale economic development programs, there is little popular support for New Delhi. The guerrillas could probably sustain another long rebellion in Nagaland's difficult terrain. [redacted]

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NOTES

25X1 Czechoslovakia: National Assembly President Smrkovsky yesterday hinted that he may be downgraded when a new federal parliament is formed later this month. In a nationwide speech, Smrkovsky said that his status will be clarified shortly, but urged his supporters to refrain from demonstrations on his behalf. Smrkovsky dissociated himself from the pro-Smrkovsky movement, undoubtedly to discourage public outbursts if he is dropped from his parliamentary post. [REDACTED]

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25X1 Arab States - Israel: Conflict along Israel's borders has remained at a comparatively low level over the past few days, but the danger of another major confrontation is high. Lebanese authorities are increasingly discouraged. The commander-in-chief of the Lebanese Army remarked on 3 January that the terrorists can no longer be "ignored or escaped." The governments of the "moderate" Arab states directly involved in the current border incidents, Lebanon and Jordan, are facing an increasing groundswell of popular support for the terrorists despite their obvious desire to avoid escalation of hostilities. [REDACTED]

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